

JAN 13 2000

MR. SCHMIDT: Isn't that good news, huh? Well, my name is Jerry Schmidt, and I'm actually here fairly unprepared tonight. I just heard about this hearing at five o'clock today on a radio station where a programmer made an impromptu announcement of this hearing, and I thought, damn, that's pretty important stuff. And folks in Nevada -- well, there's some folks here. I'm sorry about this, man. You know, you guys are under some incredible pressure with an ugly issue. This is a really ugly issue. Nobody wants to deal with this stuff, and it's very uninteresting, that's for sure, but it's scary as hell so we need to do it.

1 I would like to echo Amy O'Connor's earlier comment with regard to notice. [I'm blown away that I just heard about this at five o'clock today and hurried down here to speak. I've got to get up at 4:30 in the morning, and I waited around just to make these comments. But I think you could do a better job of public notice on these types of things.]

2 But all in all, I was involved in this issue back in the mid 80's. [I heard Cynthia say earlier that Yucca Mountain will be the worst spot for this stuff, there couldn't have been a worse spot. Well, there was a worse spot between Six Year Peaks (phonetic) in Canyonlands National Park, but luckily Utah wasn't blessed with this waste.]

But the fact of the matter is that because of my experience in the mid 80's with this process, I happen to know, or actually I feel that this hearing here right here tonight is a bunch of crap. This hearing is a bunch of crap, this process is a bunch of crap, and the decision to focus on Yucca Mountain is a bunch of crap, because frankly, the Department of Energy is probably one of the most politicized agencies in the federal government. And the fact is that way back in the early years of this process there were places in consideration for a nuclear waste depository that were taken out just because of political pressures, and I'm breaking cobwebs in the back of my brain trying to remember this stuff from the 80's, and I've slept since then. But I think it was -- was it Jim Wright? Was he out of Texas? I think there was a site in Texas that was just primo for this type of thing. Right out the door. They didn't want it there, you know. And there were others across the country, too. I think there was even one up in Wisconsin or Minnesota that was looking really nice.

And the thing about that was is that those are so much closer to where these plants are. Most of them, I mean, I look at the map here and there's just a handful that are on the western side here of the country, but most of them are in the eastern part of the United States. I just had a quick perusal of the DEIS, I guess it is, and I'm looking over those transportation distances. It's outrageous. Why are we moving all this stuff to the West? Why are we dumping it on the West again? There have to be sites out in the east, and if not, we could do something about that. But the thing that scares me is this idea of transporting all this waste across all these miles. It's just a ridiculous decision.

3 [The thing with -- part of the problem with the transportation is, like other people have mentioned, the terrorist threats and such. And that's certainly an important thing to consider. I mean, you just had Seattle cancel the Y2K celebration in fear of terrorism. Thank God, I mean, that's the thing that nobody focused on. But I'm so glad we didn't have bombs go off across the country on January 1st, but the seems to me that that thought wasn't in people's minds throughout the country.]

And the fact is that if some terrorist, someone with a grudge who wants to go and take a shoulder-mounted bazooka type thing, armor-piercing rocket or whatever and shoot it at these things, it might work. We might have a problem with it.

4 [And then I look in the DEIS, and this -- what do you call it -- a region of influence is only 50 miles on this thing. If you would have an accident on the highway, you would only consider it 50 miles. You know, that's ridiculous.]

5 The fact is, this DEIS may be well done. I really don't know about it. But I'm very skeptical of the Department of Energy. Like I said, I think it's one of the most politicized agencies, and that's what my experience has shown. I think asking the DOE to make a decision like this is like asking Bill Clinton to judge a beauty contest after privately interviewing all of the contestants in a closed room. It's the type of trust that I have in this agency.

2 I do think that it has been a long process, 17 years. People can go back and forth and say, yeah,
(cont'd.) when you looking at nuclear waste, 17 years is a blink of an eye; and yeah, they may be right. But 17 years of hearings and different things that you folks are going through is a long time; but the fact is that Yucca Mountain deserves to be disqualified simply because of the fact that other sites that are more well qualified were taken off the map early in the political process that accompanied the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in the subsequent finding of a home for the temporary -- or the permanent storage of the waste.

6 The other thing, as far as DOE goes, I think a lot of this stuff that you're going into, you're guessing on stuff that you really don't know a whole lot about, and I think that's a factor. We're just kind of stuck with that, but I think sometimes the confidence level in the report is a little bit overdone.

2 So in closing, I think that you are making a mistake in asking us to accept the waste out here in the
(cont'd.) West. You're going in an area -- and again, the politics of it all, I mean, Nevada, how many electoral votes do they have? How many electoral votes does Utah have? That's why these things get stuck out in the West. You couldn't stick it in Texas or California if you tried to, and that's because of all votes and such, irregardless of the geological features and population issues.

7 So I think it's a problem. I'm not for this site being utilized for this. I think there's also issues as you've heard discussed with the Shoshone Nation and whether the federal government has a right to the land.

8 And then also I'll say something in closing that I think probably not many people have thought about, but I heard somebody talk about it at a hearing a few months ago. And I'm here tonight to speak for the animals, because there are no animals here tonight speaking. We're all talking about humans and human impacts and all that kind of stuff. But the fact of the matter is, there's an incredible population of flora and fauna out there we need to take care of, and if you have an accident it's going to affect the environment. You're going to have human impacts, but you're also going to have impacts to the natural areas and also to the animals as well that never created this waste and never got any benefits from it.

So there you have it, and thanks for the people for showing up and being here for this very tough subject, but it's important. So thank you very much and thanks for the DOE for showing up.